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The President's Prize is determined by a two step procedure. First, each editorial staff elected its choice of 10 entries to be submitted to Dr. Conn. Dr. Conn, then, personally chose the prize winning piece for each category. Each submission is presented anonymously in both stages.

On the Way to Vacaville

by Tim Livingood

His mother sobbed,
a swollen face
streaked by grief streams;
oblivious to the strange relatives
arranged about the room like
unfinished caskets.
At twelve years I was a
virgin at funerals,
but when Grandma asked me
to play Amazing Grace on my guitar
Uncle Lloyd's became my first gig.

I barely new him,
but wilted and finally cried
when my aunt led me
to the backyard where
the 750 Triumph sprawled,
all mangled and red like
the deer Daddy hit
on the way to Vacaville.

Hitchhike

by Tim Livingood

Impotent wipers groan
And push across
The flooded windshield,
Submerged.
I scald my tongue, fog my
Specs in short slurps
Of black caffeine and
While wishing I could unscrew
My head and place it on
The seat beside me to sleep.
His pale, dripping thumb
Appears in the wash of
My headlamps.
A face distorted by the
Aquarium view pleads like
A beggar for alms, thumb
Jabbing the air toward the
Dark, vanishing pavement.

Remorsefully I pass, splash,
And heed mother's warning
of hitchhikers-
And for a moment imagine
The profane tapestry woven
By the drenched figure
Shrinking in my rearview.

Cease The Siren's Wail

by Tim Livingood

Cease the siren's wail
that incites children
to run screaming,
hands over ears;
old women, cloth covered
heads, to clutch precious
crosses tethered
to wrinkled necks.

Cease the siren's wail;
the thunderous cacophony
and convulsive spasms of
staggering earth, sheets of fire
raining from men's rage.

Cease the siren's wail,
its cry, a howling dog's echo of
fear while men scatter
like ants disrupted by
a curious boy's stick
and weeping mothers
search for love's flesh
and blood entombed
beneath the rubble.

President's Prize for Poetry

President's Prize for Fiction

Remember the Sabbath by Scott Vaughn

"Six days shalt thou labor, but on the seventh day shalt thou rest," Tucker read aloud to me. I studied him carefully, looking especially at his eyes. Usually they were blue, as blue as those of a baby, but today in the orange light of the setting sun they seemed to be gray and cloudy, so much like the ocean before a coming storm. "What should I do?" he wondered out loud, talking more from frustration than asking a question. We both thought back to the day before, when our boss, Mr. Jackson, had yelled in his drunken state. I could still see the bloodshot eyes, watery and colorless, the face twisted in anger as he spat, "You will work on Sunday or you will not at all, MR. Tucker Samuels." You see, Tuck was a religious young man, it was almost like he and God had a personal thing going. He had never worked on the Lord's day, no matter how bad off times were here in the coastal towns. And though he had missed some of our best catch days out in the tides, he never regretted it, for he said that the Lord cares for those that He loves. But, this coming Sunday was a special day, a day that was meant to come only once in a man's life. It was a day when..... I was brought back to the here and now by a new noise. Not the noise of the creaking old dock where we sat, or the noise of the gentle slapping of the water against the weathered oak posts that held the dock, it was not the noise of the gulls calling as they wheeled above against the pink-tinted clouds of a dying day. I didn't need to turn and see what this new sound was, for I knew it by heart. Putting his worn Bible down onto the splintered wood beside him, Tucker stood up, his whole face

becoming an ever widening smile as..... as SHE ran lightly down the long dock toward him. With a groan, I covered my face in mock disgust and fell over onto my side against the damp wood of the dock. Tap, tap, tap, came the feet, closer and closer to us. You know, I was proud of my best friend; he made me laugh as he pulled himself up straight and walked forward to meet her. "Hello, darlin'," I'd say in my best Tucker Samuels impression, making my voice deep like his. He shot an "angry" look downward at me as he passed, then, sure as daybreak, softly said, "Hello, darlin'," and he took the woman gently in his arms as they met. "Hi, honey," I'd coo back in my best imitation yet of her. Laughing, she pulled away from him and playfully pounced on me as I laid on the dock. I couldn't help a childish giggle that escaped as she tickled me, her brown, curly hair spilling down as we nearly rolled into the warm, salty shallows. Tucker laughed, and we all settled down to watch the last rays of the setting sun over the tall palmetto trees that guarded the sky. Pink to purple, purple to blue, and blue into black.

We talked long that night, and as the cool ocean winds washed over our tired bodies, it seemed to make us closer than we'd ever been. "But it's just not right to work on Sunday," Tucker said, "It's right there in black and white." I could feel his frustration, and I knew how much he needed to keep his job. His need was this one with us that listened and understood. Her name was Michelle, and they were to be married in just six days.

She was a wonderful woman, more beautiful than any other, even I could see that. Everyone thought so. Michelle was just taller than five feet,

with hair the color of honey, and eyes as green as the ocean. But if you looked only at the outside of her, you'd miss the very best part of her, for it was from within that her beauty showed its source. That girl would listen to you like a mother. She never seemed to mind all the hours Tucker talked out his frustrations or his deepest fears about taking her as his wife. I liked her because she spoke her mind, but never in a way that was offensive or rude. They loved each other deeply, and each seemed to want to give without asking for a return. Some Sunday afternoons I'd come sputtering down the sandy road in my rusty blue truck and find them walking barefoot on the blacktop, hand in hand, both laughing at some little something that they thought was funny about themselves. They had planned to get married on a Sunday, in the little white church with the big black ladies where Michelle helped teach Sunday-school to the Negro children from all around the island. Her father would marry them; he was a retired minister who had never lost his faith though he had lost some of his churches. Tucker had asked me to be his best man, and I was more than proud to be able to stand there with him on that day that meant more to him than any other. I guess you could say that they had everything to look forward to.

Michelle spoke softly. "Tuck, Jack promised to have you back Sunday by three, and the ceremony doesn't start until eight. Honey, I know that you're dead set against this, but if you did work just this once, I think that the Lord will understand. He gave you that job like we prayed for. I think He could see this far down the line, then." Even in the dark I could almost see the words sinking into Tuck, and I could

nearby feel him wrestling with his decision. We sat a long time in silence together. I thought back to how nervous Tuck used to get when he'd ask Michelle for a date, and I was glad that the darkness covered my smile at such a serious time like this. After a while Tucker spoke quietly. He said, "I'll speak to Jack one more time. If he still wants to fire me if I won't work, I guess that I'll just have to do it." The decision seemed to sit well with each of us, for no one had much more to say. We walked Michelle to her car; Tuck talked quietly with her for a minute kissed her on the cheek, and sent her on her way. We walked for home under a blaze of fiery stars, each one seemed more near than ever before, almost as if they came closer to see what tomorrow would bring.

Monday dawned clear and bright, and we watched the sun rise over the rolling eastern horizon as we hooked the nets to the machines and let them out into the warm, foamy water. Today looked like a good day for a catch, and so we weren't surprised to find our nets teeming with life when we made our first pickup passes at mid-morning. We worked hard offshore, hooking and cutting, tying ballast onto the bottomside of the eight foot high nets to keep them down, repairing buoys, and throwing fish. That day they came over the stern of the trawler by the thousands. Big, bright, lesser-dolphin, their bull-like heads shiny green against the deep blue stripes lined with red along their sides. Heavy green albacore, long and streamlined, snapping side to side, their bodies twisting as they were thrown onto the slippery, bloody deck. All morning we worked, wearing only our stained shorts and our knee-high rubber boots. It was the kind of work that always seemed new, for nearly anything that could swim was apt to come flopping over the back and onto the deck as the huge spool whirled and chatted under the strain of a half-mile of nets ballast, buoys, and struggling fish. But despite the danger and the back-breaking lifting, we were happy. Two years

of life on the boat had tanned Tuck and me like the lowcountry Indians who lived on the little salty creeks that meandered through Kingfisher Marsh. We were darkest on our backs, for most of the day was spent bent over, sorting fish, throwing the runts or the unwanted, and keeping the species that were in season and healthy. One had to stay alert out there, too. Just last summer one of the hands on the 45-footer "Caroline" had become entangled in the netting as it was being taken onto the big spool, and he was run all the way through the 10-inch gap, changed in one second from another seasoned worker into a shadow that sits in a wheelchair and stares out at the Charleston shipyards from the confines of a hospital. We tried not to think about that too much. Instead our time was spent hollering and laughing over the drone of the diesel engines as we worked a half-mile offshore. Tucker couldn't seem to go for more than ten minutes without talking of Michelle. Theirs would be a different wedding. They didn't think so much of tradition as most folks did, and so Michelle was going to come to the dock to pick up Tuck on the afternoon of the big day, all dressed up in her wedding gown, and they'd go back to his little place and she'd do all that she could to help him get ready. Everybody liked that idea, but I think I did the most. I often tried to picture how beautiful she would be as she ran down the dock to meet him, her skirts held up high with both hands, her hair crossing onto her face as they neared. They had agreed upon a handshake that day, since Tuck wouldn't be in much shape to keep her clean if he hugged her. I could hardly wait to see it all happen.

We headed for home about four that afternoon. Tuck and I sat on the broad, cracking wood of the stern as we slowly rocked and rolled our way toward the docks. "Well, here goes my last try," Tucker said as he stood up and walked toward the front where Jack steered us for home, the wheel in

one hand and a bottle in the other. I saw him swallow hard as he got up. I couldn't hear much of what was said, but I could tell right away that Jack meant to stick with his previous decision, though it seemed more of a face-saving than a logical stance. After a few minutes together, Jack turned to face Tuck, and jerked his left hand, thumb out, back to me. I didn't need to ask what the answer was. I could see the disappointment more than the anger as I watched my friend. He looked at me after a few quiet minutes, and I gave him my full attention for a few seconds, then stood and walked over to the rusty old mop bucket and started the last of cleaning the drying deck.

Tucker just didn't seem very much like himself the rest of the week as he and I spent most of our evenings getting the last of the things done for the wedding on Sunday evening. Saturday night we did our best to pack the last of his honeymoon clothes into that lopsided red suitcase with the shiny brass corners. We shared a few laughs, but there always seemed to be something very important that needed to be said. I wanted to tell him for the last time how I'd appreciated his friendship through the years, and how I knew that he was the luckiest guy in the whole world to be the one that Michelle would love forever. But the words just wouldn't come, and in the ghostly white light of a full moon, we shook hands slowly, and I left for home.

Sunday morning dawned crystal-clear and warmer than usual. We were well down the coast before the first huge curving arch of the sun came rising from the deep waters of the eastern horizon. I could feel the tension there between Tuck and Mr. Jackson, especially when they had to work together on something. The big netting spool had jammed, and it stopped us for about an hour as we all wrestled together to free the yards of nylon that were caught. Jack was short and gruff with his orders, even more than he usually was. "Cut it, don't saw it apart, boy",

he said to Tuck as he struggled to slice through the forearm-thick mass of wet nylon. The job forced us to be close together, and I noticed extra effort between the two to do all possible not to touch any more than was needed. Finally we got the line free, and Jack quickly strode forward to get us underway again. He got to the controls and gunned the big diesel engines, quickly taking the nets and ballast from the deck, along the harness line, and into the frothy swells.

And then it happened.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Tucker step directly into the middle of the neatly folded stack of nets that were being pulled out of the boat by the weight of the twenty pound ballasts tied every thirty feet onto the net. I jerked around to shout, and I saw his eyes rise to meet my own, almost in disgust as he realized what he'd done. Pop- the green net stretched taut, and I hoped against hope that it would snap. I lunged for his hand as he lost his balance and was thrown onto the deck and quickly dragged backwards toward the rear of the boat. I grimaced as I saw him impact the fading brown wood of the stern, his head crushed down onto his shoulders, shoulder-blades breaking as he was yanked over the back and into the churning water. "JACK!!", I screamed as I ran across the oily deck and leaped high over the back. In midair I tore at the double-edged ankle knife that I always carried there. I fell headfirst into the salty water, never feeling its wetness as I moved hand over hand along the net, tearing my body through the water to reach my drowning friend. I felt him in my grip and quickly moved down his body feeling my way to where his twisted leg was entangled in the cruel net. I slashed through the net and deep into his leg, struggling frantically to the surface, dragging Tucker by his hair. His head came out of the water, and I saw that hope was gone as his neck bent too far forward, and his chin met his quivering chest almost halfway down his torso. But he had not drowned, and as I

held him, I tilted his face skyward and saw him blinking quickly. His eyes grew wide, almost like he was seeing the heaven where he was soon to go. I saw the sun reflecting brightly in his eyes, and as he gasped his last breath, it seemed I could feel his soul leave and soar away.

"Six days shalt thou labor, but on the seventh day shalt thou rest." Over and over the words echoed in my mind as we laid the broken body on the old weathered deck. Jack cried openly, knowing that he was the cause of all the pain that was soon to be. I had never felt such agony, such intense rage, or so great a need to cry. I sat beside Tucker, My throat swollen like a dam about to burst. I thought about the wedding that was being anticipated even as we idled toward home. I thought of the woman waiting, joyfully expecting her husband-to-be to jump onto the splintered dock just like he did every day, and run to meet her. I thought of all the things that I'd wanted to say to Tuck the night before. Time seemed to stand still as the coastline moved slowly past. The flock of ever-hungry gulls wheeled above, some swooping, then diving into the foamy green water beside the boat. Around the last corner we came, the brown sawgrass waving gently in the hot afternoon breeze as we passed near the sides of the twisting, marshy creek, and then nosed up to the dock. Jack's shoulders slumped downwards, then jerked up as he sobbed, his spirit even heavier than my own.

In the distance, down at the end of the dock, came the familiar sound of the slamming car door. I watched as the stunning bride ran toward our boat, her beautiful face breaking into a smile, then into laughter. The lacy folds of her dress fluttered in the wind. I turned away and all colors blended into each other as my eyes filled with tears enough to fill an ocean.

ODE TO IRELAND

By Dara LeRoy

A seed of hatred planted
In a soul too weak to hold
A feeling so fierce and selfish,
Void of love, hope--so cold.

Watered by a world whose goals
Had slipped below compassion,
Where violence, sex, and malice
Provide the utmost satisfaction.

Decadence and crime completed the
fertilization,
So the hatred grew and passed from
generation to generation.

Intensifying daily, spreading from shore to
shore,
The ill-feelings grew until they could grow
no more.

A misty, bleak morning
Saw the hatred finally bloom
Sending two innocent lilies
To two untimely tombs.

Another seed was planted
In a soul too weak to stand
Unbolstered against hatred
Running rampant through the land.
The Word and Holy Spirit completed the
fertilization,
So the love grew and spread from relation
to relation.

Watered by faith and brotherhood,
Care and peace from its Gardener above,
Receiving such daily nourishment,
The seed grew in love.

Being shared daily between friend and foe,
Despite persecution, it continued to grow.

Each misty, bleak morning
As a seed of hatred blooms,
New seeds of love are planted
...The result of an empty Tomb.

*This poem was inspired by the brutal
murder of two British soldiers in Belfast,
Northern Ireland, on March 19, 1988.

Despair

By Anthony Delisse

Harder now it is to live than slowly die,
though by the lord of lights I have been
slain,
and live a wilting death to earth to defy
such minor pangs cursed mortals deem as
much: Though oft I feel I have in lethe lain
too long beneath the crimson waves for
mercy's cool touch, I know the blood from
nails will seize my harlot heart and sordid
dream to cleanse it from the silt of styx that
slowly weighed me down with earth's
despair, and let heaven lie within its
beat where heaven's hands have stayed
those tears that formed the shadows in my
vain eye.

The Watcher

By Janet Rahamut

I STOP
AND WATCH MY PAIN
BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING
I CAN DO
TO MAKE IT BETTER.

SO I SIT STILL,
HOLD MY PAIN IN MY HAND
AND WATCH IT
AS IT HOLDS ME.
SOMETIMES IT GROWS LARGER AS I
WATCH,
SOMETIMES SMALLER,
BUT ALWAYS UGLY.

Waking Up

By Craig Fowler

Awakening to the reality of this
world
is
more frightening than the nightmare
of
idealistic ignorance.

EXPOSED by Craig Fowler

Retrospection,
how far I've come.

Introspection,
so far to go

This happens often;
analysis of my life.

The Book lies open,
my life before me;

Victim of this mockery,
my naked humanity.
Retrospection,
my hideous past.

Introspection,
my lonely future.

Mental Sadist

By Thom Holcomb

Catbird calling

Catbird f

a

l

l

ing

s i n g, teasing with my cat.

w p

oo

Like the prophets of mockery

You play, you peck > and act
with

Sardonic songs of sarcasm

sung thru a

sharpened beak of woe

Your coat of many colours

resembles blackened soot and snow.

Superior in your intellect

You prey upon his mind

You feed on his demise:

The haughty naughty feline.

Though you never feast on flesh

Your power grows as he's depressed

by your trapping circle rounds

Like a hawk you watch the ground.

Fly by one hundred times

While you chant your scoffing rhymes

And laugh 'cause he can't fly.... (with your mind)

You dodge his playful swings and

recant your lullaby.

Like a kill before a monger

or red steak before a hound

you flaunt your flying body

before you start to pound.

Your hammer little head

will strike when you swoop d

o

w

n

Bloody beak plucks out his eyes;

t m

When you set him up, he comes u b

l ing d

o

w

n.

The sociology of a classroom of a church

The "I wanna be accepted"-ness of it all
The overcompensation
The desire of relation
The rejection of those who lack the proper stuff
The clothes that make the man
The canned-California tan
The carefully crafted careless carefree look
The meticulous construction of those appearing
spontaneous.
I reach for the common thread of
our humanity and get hung by it.

By Dana George

ELEGY FOR AN INTELLECTUAL SNOB

by Angie Green

The arrogance of intellect and youth
coupled with
knowledge and education
juxtaposed to the religious haughtiness
of some believers
becomes the clique.

Criticism, knowing expressions,
smirks, and condescension for all those outside;
for all those who simplistically
analyze the word.



Nicholle Nastiuk

The arrogance of intellect and youth
develops into the mature realization
that no one cares what you know
because they know more;
No one cares where you've been-
they have been there before.

And for the religious haughtiness-
He never knew you and He never
approved.

You die alone.

Yesterday ?

by Bruce Eric West

Where's that house in the picture?
Please tell.
Long gone is that hour.
There is a crack in the mirror.
The book is dusty.
The image is fading and memories are not there.
The shirt that wore so well,
Where is it?
There were two; they were one.
Two now again.
Love faded into yesterday.
She is gone.
She has run away.
Felt good, that which is gone.
Change is here.
Where is yesterday?



Angie Green

"Stephanos"

by Anthony Delisse

There is nought but empty wind
to greet me now that you are gone,
willows in the night that bend
and lifeless leaves that kissed the sun;
and there is nought but empty wind:

I caressed the formless breath
that greeted me instead of you,
and I mourned a quiet death
of love that never fully grew;
and I caressed a formless breath
instead of you, instead of you.

BROKEN PIECES

By Leslie Michele Sanders

I am alone.
Lost in my thoughts and dreams.
I seek Your tender eyes
In a world of blindness.

I reach for Your strength
And beg for Your peace
To grace a heart so
Restless with ambition.

Each day passes
A rush of events
Filled with names and faces
Strangers, void of understanding.

They smile and pass quickly by
Hiding their tender wounds and
scars.

Desperately, they search for
answers
That never seem to come.
Lost and alone, they search.

I cry out for Your presence
And the meaning of Your words.
My heart breaks
For the death that surrounds me.

The suffocating strength of
indifference
Tears at my fading hopes
And encourages my weakness.
Defeated, I have failed You.

Sad and alone
I search for You.
In the heart of forgiveness
I find Your arms.

Surrounded by Your grace
Eyes moist with understanding
You reach for me,
Revealing the secret of the
father's love.

In Your face I see
The pain of my life
Each moment that You stood
faithfully by,
Hands protecting, love unfailing
You were there-----and I am not
alone.



Nicholle Nastiuk

A Simple Man

By Terry E. Huey

A simple man, nothing great
except one thing.

A simple man, loving caring
for all.

A simple man, not
abnormally big or small.

A simple man, who helped
anyone, anyone at all.

A simple man, a man who
was a carpenter.

A simple man, wise in all
things.

A simple man, the Son, the
risin King.

A simple man, the one that
died for me.

A simple man.



DAVID ROGERS

Minstrel Prayer: Lament for Western Civilization

by Anthony Delisse

"Light Is Sweet, And It Pleases The Eyes To See the Sun" (Eccl 11:7)

I. Bring Love-Length

To This Jungle Where The Virgins Die;
Let It Move Within The Whisper Of These Brooks
Where Incarnate Passion's Desultory Oaydreams
Live Incandescent In Our Oarknesses,
In Our Caves Of Comatose Cornus
Where Trickling Baby Tears Fall.

II. Let Us Love In Our Thin Moment, here,
Let Us Tire In Chthonic Ecstasy Together Again,
Where Foliate Flora Of The World Of Shadows
Shades Our Shame,
And The Dead Waters Sleep
Like Blood On A Bed Of Black.

III. Bring Love-Length

To The Charred Little Children Of Our Minds
That Wear The Tattered Robes Of Wilted Reason,
Where All The Light has Left
Faded Life-Patterns To The Night.

IV. Love-Length Loves;

Oead Earth has Failed Like Infant-Strength,
Its Roots have Orunk The Wannish Waves Of Our Oespair,
Here, Where We Kneel In Temples And Shrines Built On The Dust Of The
Powdered Bones
Of Martyrs And Plain Men
Mixed In Union Like The Mortar Of Our Pride.

V. Our Tombs Are Molded

With The Murdered Unborn Blood Of Our Depravity,
Blood Splashed Unnaturally
Like Lust-Wrought Desires
Of Our Pagan Sacraments.

VI. It Burns Now;

But We Saw An Felt The Flames,
And Worshipped The Fire That No Longer Burn,
Listened In The Heat
To The Sizzle And Orizzle Of Heaven-Tears

As They Rained Around Our Shadows

And Fell Like Falling Stars,
Swooping And Shimmering Downward
Like The Stolen Expectations We Shared.

VII. It Hurts Now;

For There Is No More Left In Us That Burns,
Pain gnaws The Man Within the Skin
Like Retching Dragons
That Cannot Flee The Pyres
Of Their Own Oestruction.

VIII. Love-Length And Love have Left

And No-One holds The Original Tear;
We Search All but Heaven For a Sign,
Bunded By The Shade And Luminous Trees
Of Earth's Original Seeds
Of Lust And Pain With Blood And Fear.

IX. Oh How The Winds grow Cold

In These Desperate Daydream Nighttime
Melodramas Of The Minds Of Night;
How The Rivers Run Alone In Woe
As Our Souls give Up The Light;
How Cold It Grows Where We Cannot See The Sun,
Where No Light Dwells.

X. Words Are Simply Words Again,

Souls Are Empty,
Sole Again.

XI. Our Children Are Dead,

Our Fathers Co Not Understand Us;
We Are One In This Barren Realm
Of Pleasure Sought In Pain;
Our Unborn Blood Cries Out Against Us,
And we Are Oying.

THE WORLD WEEPS SOFTLY

by Andrew Lee

The world weeps softly in a car
And fuel-injected fantasies don't die
Decaffeinated days may distort the vision,
But rack-and-pinion steering mocks derision,
And no one laughs
And no one wonders why
The wacky world weeps softly in a car

We never really asked for much
Just five-speed fears for our backseat soul--
Give a little gas, let out on the clutch,
And put out hate on cruise-control.
The wicked world weeps softly in a car.

But some don't turbo-charge their fate,
Or lead unleaded lives that stop and go;
Some travel not upon, but tread beside the interstate
Where cars move fast and hearts move slow.
The working world weeps softly in a car.

I do not see as Jacob does:
My naked nights are friendless.
I do not mind the nights because
Roads are long and thoughts are endless.

When zero to sixty means I'm getting old,
I do not need to teach the tongue
To bless the days while I am young

And curse the nights when I am cold.

You clock my dreams, ticket my smile
And point to signs that regulate the speed,
But life's not always measured by the mile,
And what's a sign if one can't read?

[Your toughest task is trying to
Forget that I'm not one of you].
For I meditate the morning star
And worlds weep softly in a car.

Televangelism

by Kathaleen Reid

hero in camera disguise,
The Man hidden from our eyes.
truth and Truth parleyed to no end
yet Christ--where, if within?
myth with Mystery,
lies with Truth
intertwined 'til hope is lost.
of Truth prevailing in our eyes.



Dave Meeks

There you sat
Conspicuous by your silence
And I, painfully aware of your presence
I waited-
Waited-
Waited for you to speak
until we were both singing
a silent song

By Celesta Sisco



LISA BELL

"Music is my Madness"

by Elizabeth Ann Lafayette

Talkin bout music is my madness
tis true, do ya like it?
Cause i luv it,
it's the grooviest groove,
ain't nuthin rise above it.
God given music, the music you can't see;
not written on pages but riding high and free.
Musical, majestic, crystal clear incisions;
lightning cast tunes, absentee visions.
Tickling tones, medicinal ectasia,
lifting lowly loners into soothing ecclesia.
Yo, it's the music, my madness:
desist all gloom and sadness,
explosion beyond sound,
spreading happiness around;
furnishing dreams out of this world,
fashioning pleasures as they hurl.
In God's presence they unfurl,
a certainty commendable,
a foundation dependable.
O music, progeny of purity,
steadfast and true,
dare i to plunge into the maddening deep of
spendor that is you?
Sweet music, my madness,
i shall linger in your gladness,
yes music is my madness!!

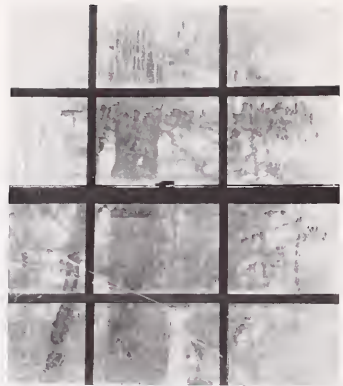
Une Realite Derniere

by Chris Bennett

To what shall you be
compared?

I know not what.

Those gone before compared their
maidens to summer days, red roses,
and silken tents. All I have is but an
idea. An ultimate reality. Plato would
smile a toothy grin and perhaps step
back, nod his head and rub his chin.
He would see that indeed there are
ideals which can be brought into this
realm. Do I dare count the ways? The
Portuguese wrote her feelings well--all I
can write is things I cannot tell. I too
stand on shores and think and worry
my pen empty of ink. And am afraid of
the fairest flower I've ever seen, but I
say "Ah love is truly lovelier than all
these."



DEBBIE SANDS



FOREIGN LANGUAGE SECTION

Vous êtes

Combien coûte le sens de la vie?
Que doit-on faire? Simplement
exister?
Les questions de chaque humaine
qui a jamais vécu.
Qui êtes-vous?
Vous êtes.
Qu'êtes-vous?
Vous êtes.
Pourquoi êtes-vous?
Vous êtes.
Comment êtes-vous?
Vous êtes.
Où êtes-vous?
Vous êtes.
Vous venez à moi et vous êtes.
De néant je suis venû.
Rationnel contre irrationnel.
Jugez cela dans la cour de paradis!
Et vous êtes.

by Jonathan Benz

Llamado del cristiano

Lucha por lo mejor,
No aceptes nada menos,
Mira hacia arriba,

Obten verdadero amor;
Compártelo con un hermano
Y luego con otro;
Muéstraselo al perdido
Y deja que el hielo
Que cubre su corazón
Y lo hace pedazos
Se derrita.
Jesús los ama también
Y tú debes amarlos.
Ellos no tienen vida
Sin Jesucristo.
Vivir es dolor,
Morir no es ganancia.
Acepta tu rol
o las almas perdidas.

by James J. Giroux

Rivière Rouge

Ma vie est une rivière rouge mon amour,
Une rivière qui court à travers mon coeur.
Bouillonnant, craint entre les jours,
Je partage avec mes concitoyens
ce lieu que nous appelons la patrie.

La vie est une rivière de sang, dès
le ruisseau de la naissance que nous
partageons
jusqu'aux grandes mers de sang-mort Mort.
Renversant, buvant, donnant, prenant,
Le sang, la rivière rouge, coule à travers la
vie.

Nos âmes sont des bateaux sur la rivière
rouge,
et la rivière court à travers nos coeurs.

by Daniel Coates

"It Is Finished"

by Christopher P. Buffa

As the cold wind shot through the sky
the evil surged; with sulfurous breath
and yellow eyes.

Thousands perhaps millions of
grotesque creatures
seeking to steal, kill and destroy.
As they swarm around their prey
their blazing fury and evil thought
soon to come to an end
as they soar in the spirit realms.

Now on the ground hiding among the
trees
swords drawn bright and true
standing; fighting for life.
The fearsome warriors
waiting for their attackers.
With the Lord on their side
and His Holy power at hand
there to defend the land.

In the field of battle, with swords of
blazing fire
evil being suppressed.
All the realm of Heaven in deep prayer
helping in the battle of the air.
Evil desire, hatred and lust
all being destroyed.
Lying, deceiving spirits
being dashed to hell.
While truth, love, and life will prevail.

The Angelic warriors
with the wrath of GOD in their hands
and our Lord Jesus at command.

The greasy black evil swept over the
town
causing a car to wreck and a baby to
cry.
The Saints on their knees in prayer
and Angelic warriors waiting for
warfare.

All of hell just seemed to open
secreting its evil.
But the Heavens darkened
and lightning catapulted across the sky
as Christ descended from on high
on a white horse, sword in hand,
demons running at his command.

Then a loud roar came from the depths
of the earth
as satan ascended from hell.
A loud voice came from heaven saying,
"It is time to take back the throne."

All those ready ascended to their new
home.
Clashing swords

the slaying of evil
as angels from heaven battled on.

Then the King of Kings and the Lord of
Lords
sheathed His sword
took a deep breath and blew.
The power of GOD at full wrath
Hit evil; strong and true
sending it to the burning pit.

Now with love and honor
we live in heaven
with our father and savior Jesus Christ
and finally without sin.

The Hermit by Mark Wilkinson

"Mary for mercy and Jesus for joy," the old hermit spoke as he closed his eyes. Then I saw his soul take flight from his humble and broken body to the world which is hidden from men, where there it will be greeted by multitudes of angels and it will rejoice forever in paradise with its lover, Christ.

I will never forget my early years as a monk at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit. It all started on a fall day in late October. I set off on my pilgrimage into the woods for a time of solitude and meditation. Although it was quite cold outside, my sack-cloth garment was wet as my body sweat from the long walk through creeks and over mountains. My mind began to wonder of the mystics of old, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis, and St. Theresa and how they experienced God in a different way. Then I came to a large tree, one of the biggest trees I had ever seen. So I sat down, being exhausted from my journey. Sweat rolled down my brow like rain down a leaf. I sat for a while thinking of Jesus and him hanging on the cross with a river of blood flowing from his battered body. I began to weep as my heart sank into my stomach out of grief for the pain I and all mankind caused God our Lover and Creator. When in the midst of my pain three figures dressed in all white appeared to me. I knew right then it was the spirits of St. Francis, St. Theresa, and St. John of the Cross, for it was God who made me think of them. St. Francis spoke to me, "Yes Brother Sun has opened your eyes and Sister Poverty has set you free, but hold not back your heart from understanding your grief." St. Theresa then pointed to a large hole on the other side of the tree. Then the Heavenly figures began to vanish away, but I cried to them, "Please don't go, but stay, as your presence comforts me." But this is where my story begins. For there I saw the hermit at the bottom of

the tree.

The hermit was a little man who looked as gentle and jolly as a little bird singing in a tree. There he stood this fragile little man, who glowed as if he were the sun. He reached out and took my hand, and we entered the hole in the tree. His place was quite little, but most homey. On the left was his bed and on the right a small table with a very old and large Bible that was open to the second book of Maccabees, chapter seven, containing the horrible martyrdom of the Jews. But the one thing that kept drawing my attention was the wooden crucifix in the center of the room with a small altar beneath it. The crucifix also was old like the little man, and was hand carved with the greatest of detail. The sight of it nearly brought tears to my eyes. The Jesus who hung on that cross was so beaten and battered that his skull and bones showed through. His flesh hung like wax dripping from a candle. Oh, my heart cried out with sorrow at such a sight, for this was my Lover and I was his beloved. I turned to the old hermit with tears as wide as the ocean filling my eyes. Without saying a word, he turned and pointed at the crucifix. He did not have to say anything, for I somehow knew what he meant. He had carved the crucifix long, long ago. Then we proceeded to sit down. We broke bread together and read from God's holy scripture. The whole time I could not keep from looking at the crucifix. But as we continued to talk, the hermit told me of his hours of prayer, reading, and meditation. Even though he lived here all alone as a hermit, he would make his way into the distant cities as often as possible. Along with a staff and a pouch around his neck, he brought the message of salvation, the proposal of marriage, from the Bridegroom to the bride. He shared this invitation with the rich, who rejected him and his proposal, and

the poor, who greeted him, even though they had nothing, with gifts and kisses.

For that whole year I went and visited the old hermit. But it was on that last visit that changed my life. Even now just thinking about it, my heart beats like thunder. On that cold winter day, with the heat of only a small candle, my world changed. The old monk pulled a stack of letters from a large chest, that had been buried beneath the ice cold ground. The letters looked old, even older than any of our writings found in the library at my monastery. My palms were wet with anticipation. My soul was longing as a seed beneath the ground awaiting the first sign of spring. He unrolled the first letter, and with a lump in my throat I uttered the first sentence. I read the words that broke my heart and brought me to my knees. My hands trembled, and my body sweat like a river as I read the letters. For there, on the paper, was a diary of an old monk who beheld the slaying of the Lamb of God. Upon these papers was the history of the church from the time of Christ until the present. But the longest and greatest detail of all his writings was the crucifixion of Christ. In all my life, I have never read such a horrible, yet beautiful description of the dying Lamb of God and the forgiveness brought to all men. An angel of the Lord had chosen him to walk upon the earth, until the last generation, who would usher in His kingdom already prepared here. But the old man wept as he told me that he begged the Lord for mercy so he may die and God choose another. The old hermit said, "I want to be with my Lover. For the world has forgotten him and his suffering on the cross. I can not bare to see the Gentiles crucify him again in their hearts." His tears then went away as he looked toward heaven and said, "Mary for mercy and Jesus for Joy." With a smile he went to meet his

bridegroom, Christ.

So now, I am the one chosen to walk upon the earth until God's Kingdom is fully established. Then he will come again in glory, but this time to rule forever.

Life's Journey by Scott Redmond

Life is like a journey. It has a starting point, a progressive course, and a destination. As you travel life's road, the decisions you make determine the amount of success or failure will obtain. Veer to the left or to the right, take a wrong turn, or miss your exit, and you may be delayed, or even become lost.

Life has speed limits and rules that must be considered. Try to live too fast, and you may be in danger of crashing. Ignore the laws of life, and you could endanger others as well as yourself.

Just as fuel in our car, time must be used discerningly, investing it in worthy efforts, and a wisely reckon direction. We can not go through life blindly without orientation, or we will ultimately spin out of control and become but another statistic of fatality, broken by life's highway.

As a journey, life should be enjoyed, for the trip is half the fun. But life must also be taken seriously, for the trip can be extremely dangerous. We must take heed so that we may not only reach our destination, but reach it in the most efficient, effective manner possible.

A Child's Sweetest Christmas

by Joey Mathew

I stared at the wrapped box standing on the headboard of my bed. The gift wrapping had to be chosen by a professional, the wrapping had children riding on sleighs, having snow fights, and building little

snowmen. I picked up the box and tried to peek in but was unsuccessful. I have never been so curious before! It was the middle of the school year, I was nine years old and in the third grade. I had already given my Christmas present to Tina Rives who I had an enormous crush on. I impatiently waited for a return gift, then finally it came in. Instead of putting it under the tree with the rest of my presents, I kept this special gift with me. I treasured the gift dearly and virtually had it by my side all the time. I got the most weird looks from people! Thinking back on it I guess it really was kind of odd. For instance, at church instead of bringing a Bible, I brought my Christmas present! On occasions, I even slept with it while I dreamt of the beautiful girl that gave it to me. Finally when Christmas morning arrived, I grabbed the present from under my pillow and ripped it open. I was shocked. Inside the box was the oowiest, goowiest, and most melted chocolate that I have seen in my nine years of living! It didn't take long for me to figure out that I couldn't share any of the chocolates with her later on. My reaction was basically how everyone reacts in this situation. My eyes turned into dollar signs as I calculated in my head who got the best gift. I was slow in math but it didn't take me long to know that my present was more suitable. The disappointment left while I stopped to think of the whole idea. It was silly on how I poured over her gift so much and reality taught that it was this idolatry that destroyed the gift itself. The next time I saw Tina she asked me how the chocolate was. As I took the books from her hand I thought as hard as I could.

"Dowey and goeey." I replied. Then I walked her to school.

Running to Stand Still by Chuck Tryon

Mike Thayer still wasn't satisfied with his time. He'd allowed a few seconds for that red light at Crabtree Road and a few more for that long train of cars that kept him from crossing Lake Ashford Place, but he was still disappointed with his time on the five mile course he'd just run. I should be at least thirty seconds quicker on that course. I haven't had that bad a time since high school. That was awful. Maybe I need to go back out and run a couple more miles and really whip myself into shape. He limped weakly over to his mailbox which was lined up along with the others at the base of the staircase leading up to his apartment. Still gasping for breath and feeling the adrenaline, Mike fumbled the combination on his mailbox before succeeding to open it.

He scanned the mail slowly, reading the outside of each envelope carefully and completely as if they were clues to a puzzle, before making the steep climb to his second floor apartment. He found a phone bill with FINAL NOTICE stamped across the front in a burgundy-red color. He flipped past a couple more bills, muttering angrily at the mounting frustration of bills piling on top of bills with no relief from the barrage in sight. The last piece of mail came mysteriously wrapped in a plain white personal envelope with his address handwritten across the front in an indistinguishable script. He curiously ripped into the mysterious envelope, discovering as he slowly climbed the steps to his apartment that he'd been invited to the ten year reunion of his graduating class at Pickney County High School. He laughed at the absurdity of the idea of facing friends and acquaintances from high school and having to tell the same lies he'd been telling his family, his friends, and everyone else the last five years.

As he wiped his forehead dry with a sweat-soaked road race t-shirt, he imagined himself standing in a

corner, wearing that uncomfortable, beat-up brown suit nodding politely at the Jennings brothers' stories of corporate takeovers, laughing with Ellen Patterson- he couldn't remember her married name- at past memories of parties, he really did not want to think about, and worst of all, being forced to relive the "glory days" of the Pickney High track and cross country team. Then, it would be his to speak, to recite the story he'd created about himself and his life after high school. Everything is fine. Andrea is great. Mike, Jr. is the star of the soccer team. The job situation is kind of bad for me right now, but I'm planning to go back to school. I'll probably study business. Wish I'd never quit. Well, it's not all lies. Andrea is happy- happily remarried. Mike, Jr. is the star of his under 10 city league team, but I haven't seen him in a year. And, I do wish I'd never quit school. It's just all those classes and things interfered with my running. I had to keep my scholarship and I thought, maybe, if I picked up my pace a little... Maybe if I picked up my pace, I would be all right.

Mike shook his head and laughed at the thought of showing up at the reunion. He crumpled the invitation in his left fist and tossed it in the direction of a long neglected trash can in the corner of his dark, sparsely furnished living room. He sat down on his sofa and stared across the room at his television set. He was not even sure what program was on- he had not cared for anything on television for years. He just did not want to think about the fact that he had to work tonight. He did not want to think about how poorly he'd been running the last few days. He did not want to think about the fact that he had been out of school for ten years. He did not want to think about anything. Bored with the television, Mike glanced around the room as if he'd never really looked at it before. He knew that if he did not get a higher paying job soon, he wouldn't be looking at the shadowy, stucco walls much longer. He began pacing around the room in a

small circle, feeling like a condemned and forgotten prisoner. His eyes fixed themselves on the small front window. He longed to escape, to leap free through the window, and released, run freely into the cool, black night air, never to look back on the apartment or any of the horrors housed within. *** Symbols of his past surrounded and haunted him. Each object brought back a part of his past. The invitation to the reunion brought back a flood of memories. As if in a trance, Mike pulled down his old scrapbook from a dusty bookshelf. He wiped the cover clean with a dust towel. He opened the cover gently and as he flipped through the pages, he felt the thrill of youth and competition rush through him. He read countless articles about dual meets, regional battles, and even state competitions. Headlines from the local paper announced the introduction of Pickney High School's two phenom runners. "Nichols and Thayer Lead Pickney." Meet after meet, the two competitors shared the glory; however, the teammates did not manage to share victories. Somehow, Reid Nichols always managed to finish at least one second ahead, one stride ahead of his teammate. Even when Reid came to the meet tired or with a limp, he still managed to find enough strength to pull off the victory.

Mike had found his way out. All he had to do was beat his old high school teammate in a race. He only had to beat Reid Nichols one time and then he could stop running. He could stop the incessant pounding on the pavement. He would not have to live with sore hamstrings or bad knees or exhaustion ever again. He would be able to break free into the open air at last. He now found himself wanting more than anything to go to that high school reunion. He smoothed the wrinkles in his invitation and pulled the edges out flat. He would have one more page to add to his scrapbook, this one a symbol of ultimate victory. He began making special preparations. He ran more than ever, but for the first time, he ran with a purpose. He even dry cleaned his suit and bought a new tie just for the reunion. He

was going to be ready for Reid Nichols.

Mike did go to the reunion. He wore his old suit and his new tie and sat in a corner of the hotel ballroom, nervously sipping punch and snacking on peanuts. He tried to avoid eye contact with any of his classmates. Like a hit man preparing to assassinate some great hero, Mike Thayer was here to see one man. He sat in the corner, brooding, half praying that his old teammate would show up. His fingers twitched nervously as he brought the punch glass to his lips, and he stared out into the night through a couple of large bay windows that flanked the front podium. He had just pushed his chair from the table at which he was sitting with the intentions of leaving when he saw a tall, dark-skinned man wearing what looked like an expensive suit. He immediately recognized the man as being his teammate. Having made eye contact, Mike was forced to greet Reid. They exchanged formalities and told their lies about what they'd been doing for the last few years. Finally, Mike was ready to issue his challenge. "Hey, Reid, do you still do any running?"

Reid stated that he occasionally ran in a couple of road races every year, but did not do much running. After a couple of seconds of nervous silence, Mike finally said, "Let's run one last mile and see how the old legs have held up. I'll bet we could have quite a race." After a moment's hesitation, Reid agreed to the challenge. "O.K. let's do it."

The two runners reclined on a grass embankment after the race. The race had been close. Mike had eagerly burst into the early lead, but had worn down. Reid caught up with Mike and passed him. They ran evenly up to the finish line where Reid stumbled and fell, helplessly watching as Mike crossed the finish line, arms raised in a moment of triumph. Mike laid back in the grass, breathing easily the cool night air.

a tribute to e.e. cummings

By Daniel Coates

splattering raindrops of thought
 raise crowns of the i-ma-gin-a-tion
heavy clouds of ideas blow into sight of consciousness
 blotting out the shining
 rays of mindful numbness
windswept
sparks of
mentality cascade and tumble
 like leaves torn from the trees
of the mind
 inspirational flashes of lightning
 precede thundering concepts of depth
a
raging
 storm of thought
 appears magically
 on the mind's
 landscape
passing over
the horizon of awareness
 as Thor's Id goes to sleep



NICHOLLE NASTIUK

Cambridge Homeless, Winter 1991.

by Kathaleen Reid

Latrine of public corners.
Water from jagged holes,
Food from apple pits,
Bed of cement,
Blanket of paper,
Pillow of shards.

LONELINESS

by Sherry Holcomb

The dreary fear that I know all too well
Is still alive in this earthly hell.
The empty sound of the clock
Mechanically beating -- tick-tock, tick-tock, . . .

The stale, cool stench of the midnight air
Silently whispers ... "no one is there."
Its echo sounding within the room,
Portraying proudly its message of doom.

Emptiness, silence, stillness, ... , portrayed;
They're all a part of this fleshly grave.
Forced to live with this intense agony
Springing up within the depths of me.

Deep down within the depths of my soul,
A seed was planted, but oh, how it's grown.
Tangled and twisted, this thorn-bearing tree --
Scratching and choking my life from me.

Out of desperation, I scream, and I groan
Then fate overtakes me -- alone and unknown.
Without a friend -- someone to care,
Life dimly passes because no one is there.



NICHOLLE NASTIUK

OF GRANDPA--WITH LOVE AND ANGER

By Sabord Woods

I

He grew roses--
not gardensful of them,
just a bush at the time.

He whittled--
not to watch the shavings curl--
but, rather, to shape the residue.

He played the banjo--
not to show off mad fingers,
dancing across the strings--
but to view the wild delight in a
child's eye.

He spoke philosophically--
of life, of love, of God,
of many things--
without a reason, perhaps,
except the need to know
through speaking.

He read: the Bible.
It only--
all of it--once each year.

II

He could not know
the sum total
of the influence brought to bear
upon small, wide-eyed urchins
dancing upon his shoes,
following him
with pattering feet and wistful look.

Had he known,
he never would have wished
to leave us,
going away to six feet under
while a contemplative grandson
suffocated with memory--

Passing to unapproachable realms,
while those who love his
fought to reconcile themselves
to memory and to unrequited anger,
not letting him die and be dead,
but resurrecting him periodically
with pang of love and regret.

III

He lives--with roses,
and banjo music,
and wood-carved figures,
and whirring sawmills--
in the childhood hearts who knew
and felt him.
in the adult heads who bear his
deeply etched imprint,
in the aged hands who clasp him yet
in burning memory.

He loves--in unapproachable realms
--with God.



Nicholle Nastiuk

Dans le Jardin

by Chris Bennett

My mind will not cease to reel
at vignettes explored and
often wonder how it would feel
for we two to be first hand in
a scene of primordial beauty and
innocence. Where from dust we have
derived and to see you as pure, as
now I do. We do not yet know the
pain, we have not yet crushed the
serpent's head. All of this will
come in time. But for now this
feeling cannot be escaped so I say
" Nous sommes les deux dans le jardin."

Retournons a la Jardin

by Chris Bennett

X

The sun is now setting in the garden
and the air possesses a chill. Night
comes quickly. The garden is quiet.
Two stand apart from each other, one
crouches low, unmoving, desiring not to
be found. So it is in the garden now. The
voice that was once so sure now quivers
as it asks, " Qui sont les deux le
jardin? "

Bear Cove Road by Vicki Blankenship

The sun winks
Through tiptoe treetops,
And the wind blows,
And the road winds
Into sleepy corners
Of country cobwebs
Where lifetimes blink by
The eyes in passing.
Waving leaves fade
To orangey-red hues
Reflected in the
Blue Ford window,
And the red tips of fall
Slowly frost over
The green of summer,
And the mountains look
Like jolly fruitloops
In yellow and orange
And rosy in bunches,
As the road snakes
Into churchyard valleys,
And the dogs bark
In soft red mud
Behind rusty barbed wired
Next to the dusty blue
Royal Crown Cola thermometer
On the screen door
Of the paint-peeled shack
As it closes
It's old, old eyes,
And the cows graze
In black and white and green,
And dirty children play,
And the road winds
Sleepily along,
Stretching behind,
And wrinkled old faces
In faded denim overalls
Wave lazily
To the eyes in passing.

Fare Thee Well

By Chris Peyton

Fare thee well may dear companion,
I bid adieu and fare thee well-
In dreams I will return to where
we-lovers leaped and sinners fell.

Not too soon will I forget
Those nights of consecration-
when our two bodies did entwine
with secret admiration.

While moonlit eyes upon us wept
our souls did take a flight.
We bowed unto the god of eros
while worshipping the night.

When I awake from dreams of thee
my heart will ache in pain-
as loneliness consumes this world
where nights did seem too long.

And every morn the sun doth rise
I'll see in it your face-
and drawing close I'll find your
eyes,
and hopeful yet-search for my
place.

The fragrance of an autumn rain
will recollect emotion-
once felt while sleeping in your
arms
of sheltering devotion.

Alas - our fate does disunite
and tear me from your side.
This solitary butterfly
must dry the tears he cried.

The winter soon will stake his creed
-declare his deathly warning,
but never shall he take from me
my thoughts of you each morning.

Nor shall the bitter bite of snow
extinguish memories fire -
where I have kept you safe and
warm
within my heart's desire.

The time has swiftly seeped away -
so be it thus - we say goodbye.
"Sear'd in heart, and lone, and
blighted,
more than this I scarce can die."

But even Death - the evil shrew-
can't steal me from your side,
For heaven will return me there-
with Memory as my guide.

*When you broke my heart
and danced on the pieces,
Was it one of the moves
She taught you?*

By Celesta Sisco

Epithumia

by Jamey Green

Why should eyes that can't have,
ever be permitted to see that which they can not
attain?

For Passion and beauty only sought, but
never gained turns from the pure honey intended into a
snare for aching hearts.

If able, would one not change his desire to that which
he could fulfill?

Or knowing the end, would he only seek that which
gives into his will?

For pain and agony within ones soul;
the bitter reality of limits untold,
fester and bulge from deep within;
with silent cries that seek only to drive
man insane.

The erotic lust and passion strong; deep desire and
aching bones;

Mind and soul tis set ablaze;
the conscience weeps while the flesh doth crave.

The Vigil

By Christopher Hensen

I heard the noise over three hours ago. It wasn't loud, I suppose. Not really. But it seemed so deafening in the silence, the silence of a lonely evening. Lonely. My wife gone. Separated.

I got up to check what it was. Who wouldn't? I was worried about my children. They stay here on the weekends. So I got up and walked down the stairs. They creaked. They were so loud. I was sure that he heard me, would be waiting for me.

He hadn't heard me, though. I surprised him. I surprised him in the kitchen because I flipped the lights on suddenly. He jumped. He was facing the other way so he didn't have time to attack before he noticed the gun. He stared at the gun for a long time before he looked at my face. I was smart to bring the gun from the bedroom when I came down.

It's not loaded, though. I never keep it loaded. Not in the house. Not with my children here. I worry about my children. I heard about the child in Florida who accidentally shot his sister. It wasn't his fault, though. It was his father's fault for leaving the gun loaded. That's why the gun isn't loaded. But he does not know that. There is no way he could know that.

I tried to call the police. I tried to call them when I first found him. I picked up the phone and there was no dial tone. It was dead. My hands were shaking but I tried to gain control of them again. He was grinning at me. "I cut the line," he said. I made the gun noticeable. I waved it in the air and he almost stopped grinning. Almost.

He cut the telephone line before he came into my house to take my belongings. He cut it so the phone wouldn't ring. So old acquaintances just passing through town wouldn't call to say they were dropping by for coffee. He did not want us to wake up. But he did not know that my children would be here. He did not know that I do not sleep when my children are here because I worry about them.

That was how it started three hours ago. Three hours. One hundred and eighty minutes. Ten thousand eight hundred seconds.

He is sitting at the kitchen table now. I am watching him closely. His hands are on the table top. They are far away from him. I demanded that. I demanded it and he did it because I am in charge and he knows it.

My children are still asleep upstairs. They did not hear the noise when I did, three hours ago. Children sleep very soundly so they didn't hear him come in.

If my wife were here, I would send her to the neighbor's house to call the police. But we are separated now. We do not get along very well, so she left to stay with her mother. I get lonely but my life goes on. I go to work and make money to do the shopping for my load. And I clean the house every week. I keep it spotless because I do not want to turn into one of these single men who does not know how to take care of himself.

But he is in my kitchen now so it isn't clean anymore. He has been saying things, things that frighten me. But I will not let him know this. I have the gun and I won't let him know because I am in charge.

He has been talking about my children. He knows what they look like. He has described them to me. I think that he has been watching the house. He must have been watching yesterday when my wife dropped the children off. He grins and says things like, "They are cute children. It would be a shame if anything were to happen to them." He says things like this and I know that he is planning something. I know he is planning something despite the fact that I have the gun.

But I am ignoring his talking now. I am ignoring it because he wants to upset me and I will not let him do what he wants to do because I am in charge. I have been trying to think of other things. I think I still love her, but I do not know. I wish that I could talk to her right now and tell her that I still love her. I try to think about things like this. But then I look at him closely and his eyes stare into my eyes and I know he is planning something. His eyes betray him. He is trying to scare me but he does not want me to know he is planning something. But I do.

He is still staring at me but something is different now. His eyes are moving back and forth and I think they are concentrating on the gun. They are going back and forth from me to the gun, to me from the gun. I don't think he realizes he is doing this. I don't think he would make it that obvious because he is planning something and he does not want me to know that. I think he is calculating his speed. I think he is going to try to grab the gun and shoot me. It is not loaded but that does not matter because once he has the gun, he will be in charge.

But I have a plan too. I have a good plan. I will tell him that we can have peace. I don't think that there is any other choice. I don't think there is any other choice because we cannot sit like this forever and I cannot allow him to take the gun away from me forcefully. I will slowly put the gun down and we will talk without nasty grins and threats and double meanings. We will become friends and perhaps we will share a beer. This is my plan because my children are not safe and the gun is not loaded and he has a plan.

But my plan will work. My plan is what we will do. It is what we will do because I am in charge.



BARRY MELTON

PERSONA

by Christopher Maynard

THE HIDDEN FACE PEERED INTO THE MIRROR
LONGING TO SEE HIS OWN REFLECTION,
BUT ALL THE SAD-EYED MAN COULD SEE
WAS THE PAINTINGS OF HIS PROFESSION,
THE AGONY AND HUMILIATION HE HAD FACED
HE NOW ADMITTED AS TRUTH,
THE POOR CREATURE EXAMINED HIS COUNTENANCE
HIS FACE BORE THE PROOF,
HE HAD TO MAKE A CHANGE
THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID,
AFTER REPEATED SPLASHES OF WATER
KRUSTY THE CLOWN WAS DEAD.



Debbie Sands

NIGHT THOUGHTS

I LIE DOWN WITH MY THOUGHTS
BUT THEY ARE NOT GOOD
BEDFELLOWS.
THEY PESTER ME, PLAGUE ME;
INSISTENT THEY ARE,
PRICKING MY MIND, PROBING MY
BRAIN,
GIVING ME NO PEACE.
"QUIET! BE STILL," I DEMAND.
"I WANT NONE OF YOU TONIGHT."
SINKING INTO UNEASY SLEEP,
I BANISH THOUGHTS AND TRY TO
MAKE
MY BRAIN A BLANK PAGE.
BUT IT'S NO USE; I CAN'T HOLD OUT
AGAINST THEM.
ONE, TWO, FOLLOWED BY THREE--
THEY ALL PIERCE MY BRAIN.
I AM HELPLESS AGAINST THEM,
SO I LET THEM HAVE THEIR WAY.
I GIVE MYSELF TO THEM, AS
ALWAYS.
UNWILLING, BUT UNRESISTING.

by Janet Rahamut

HEEBIE JEEBIE

By Nadine Blair

I lay prostrate to the will of the wind.
I think of you and I think of him.
My mind - confused
Wonders - aimlessly
Through Past and
Present and Future dreams.
Comparing loving then
With wanting now;
I try my best
To remember just how,
I got into that
And then got out.
And got into this
And can't "find-out."
I try to think
If life was better then,
Than facing "I wonder if,"
And "I hope for when."
I try to wonder
When skies were really blue,
Was I in love with him
Or am I in love with you?
And if yes to the two,
Was love ever true?
I think about truth and
I think about trust.
And if "push come to shuv"
And leave I must...
I will, but with
Broken heart I'll hide.
But forever wanting
To be by love's-side.
I lay prostrate to the will of the wind.
I think of you and
I think of him.

Beams the Shadow Edging

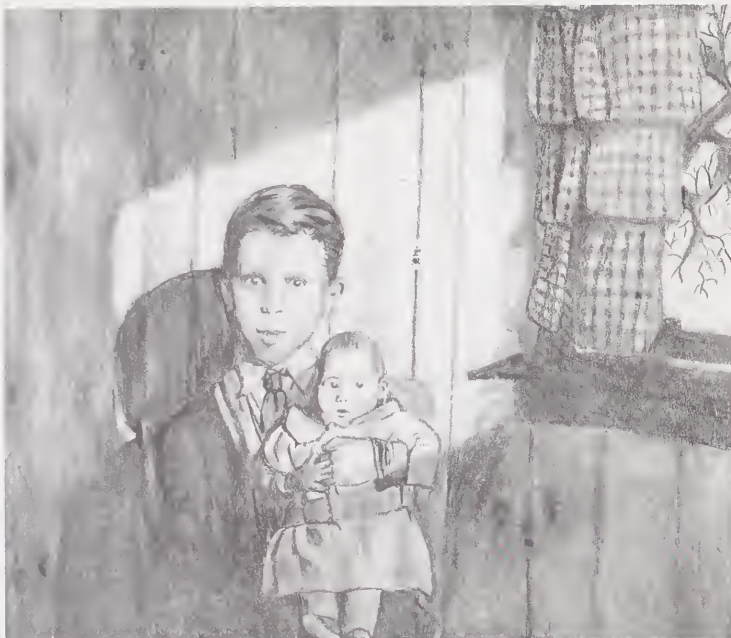
by Daniel Coates

Flashing beams split the night
while roars of thunder roll.
Rain drops fall from the sky
and bruise the leaves on the bough.
The wind races from all directions
driving the bullets of rain.
Branches creak, trees sway, and
forks of lightning crack the sky.
My heart and mind together bound
mimic the elements of nature.
Soaring, diving, fleeing, pursuing,
a storm lives within my crying soul.
Beams of light and black shadow edging
comprise the man that I am.

Someday Driver

by Steve Waters

Some days she drives the Alfa Romeo
Hugging curves she's way too slick.
Some days she drives the Mustang
0 to 60 in 3: she's quick!
Some days she drives the Town Car
Downtown, slow and lazy.
But all I know, is everyday
All she does is drive me crazy.
Head bobbing out her sunroof
All she wants is wind in her hair.
I want her to know I've inherited the wind
And I'd love to drive her there.



Nicolle Nastiuk

The world begone;
injurious opinions
of abstractions and factions;
You can dissipate and blow in the wind.
Tired I am of your approval and disapproval.
Weary I grow of your critiques.
In the eyes of those who see
is found art, deep meaning, all forms of beauty.

Why do you persist in blindness?
Living truth and beauty in your brother's eyes?
What you see is a mere speck of a picture universally wide.
Why spend your years in consuming pride
trying to oppress those you do not impress?

by Dana George

Well, its taken a lot of work and time, but here we are with Lee College's first literary arts magazine! The first thing I would like to do is thank Angie Green for all that she has done this semester. She's done a lot of work and put up with more than was called for. Angie, THANK YOU! The title, Imago Dei, means "the image of God". What the mag is supposed to be is a place for artists to freely express themselves. And Lee has many artists! There is a lot of good stuff within these pages, so sit back and enjoy this first issue. However, be warned . . . There will be more issues in the years to come!

—Daniel Coates

Thru the hard work of both the staff and submitters Lee College's first literary arts magazine has been produced. I consider it both an honor and a privilege being one of the editors of our magazine. As I surveyed the many submissions, I was amazed at the quality of the work. It caused me to think of how much more talent our college could have utilized in the years before. I would like to formally thank Mrs. Green for her hard work and making the magazine possible.

—Joey Matthew

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